

# The profession of Integration Assistant and the AFM Regional Services

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The AFM Regional Services via the Integration Assistants is devoted to helping patients affected by neuromuscular diseases. It accompanies patients and their families in all stages of the disease and helps them to face it in their daily life.

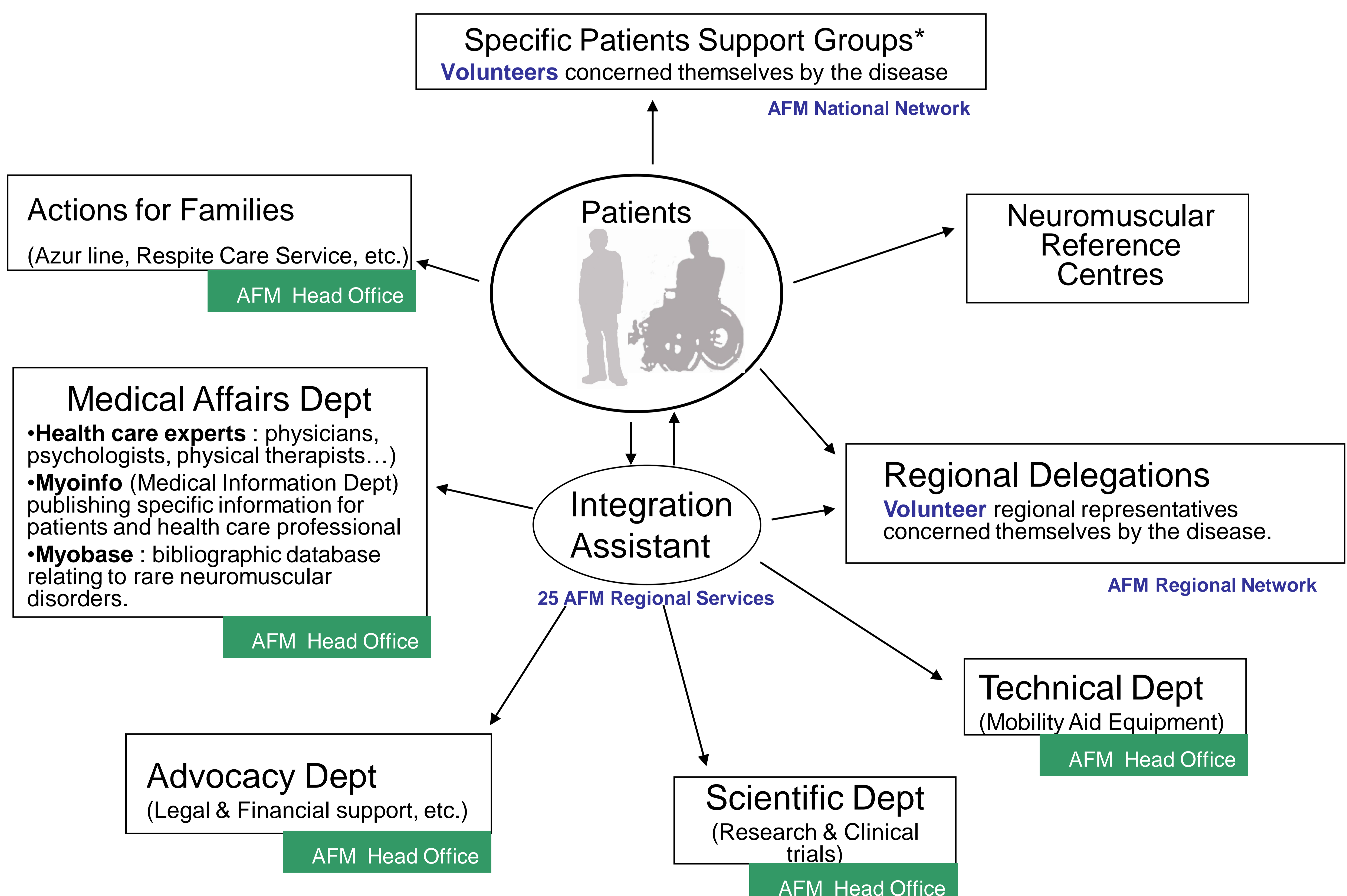
In 1988, thanks to donations of the first Telethon, AFM created the position of Integration Assistant ("technicien d'insertion" or TI in French). There are a hundred Integration Assistants who are salaried employees, divided in 25 regional services (SR) across the French country. Graduates in health or medicosocial fields, Integration Assistants attend internal complementary courses on neuromuscular diseases.

Each team of SR comprises a couple of TI, a manager and a secretary.

The TI intervene freely at the patients and their families' requests, to set up a life project. Families are welcome to use this service with no obligation of AFM membership.

Mediating between health and social services, TI help sick persons and their families to find solutions to problems caused by the disease on an everyday basis and at each stage of its progression. Interventions include : care and prevention, social, technical assistance, human assistance, struggle against isolation, job search, transportation, schooling, respite, leisure, holidays. TI engage with the public authorities who are not sufficiently sensitized to overall patient issues.

In each of the 25 regional services, the Integration Assistants intervene in close cooperation with the AFM departments and networks, and the Neuromuscular Reference Centres.



\* Specific Patients Support Groups : Spinal Muscular Atrophy, Myasthenia gravis, Duchenne-Becker Muscular Dystrophy, Myotonic Dystrophy type 1, Congenital Muscular Dystrophy, Facioscapulohumeral Dystrophy, Undetermined Myopathies